

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
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SMALLEST TURKEY CROP IN 10 YEARS

Farmers are raising 31,710,000 turkeys this year -- 10 percent fewer than last year, according to a preliminary estimate of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. This is the smallest crop since 1938. In 1945 a record crop of 44,221,000 birds was produced. Since then, there have been three years of sharp decreases--8 percent in 1946, 14 percent in 1947 and now a decrease of 10 percent in 1948. This year growers were reluctant to start poults because of the very unfavorable 1947 season, when they were forced to market birds at prices below those of 1946 after having paid the steady spiraling feed prices during the growing season. The decrease this year would have been even greater except that toward the end of the hatchery season it became apparent to growers that conditions were becoming much more favorable for turkey production. Storage stocks were no longer burdensome and were being sharply reduced. Turkey prices were improving, and prospective bumper crops indicated decreases in feed prices. This resulted in a June hatch 74 percent larger than a year earlier. Also, growers report a very favorable growing season and lower death losses.

Sharp decreases in some regions in the number of turkeys raised--22 percent in the West North Central States, 17 percent in the South Central and 11 percent in the East North Central--were partially offset by a moderate decrease of 4 percent in the North Atlantic and increases of 2 percent in the West and 3 percent in the South Atlantic States. An increase of 12 percent in California offset decreases in some of the other Western States and resulted in a 2 percent increase for the area. Increases of 4 percent in Virginia, 25 percent in West Virginia, 17 percent in South Carolina and 3 percent in Georgia more than offset decreases in other South Atlantic States. The number of turkeys being raised is the same as a year ago in Missouri, Washington, Utah, Indiana, Tennessee, Connecticut and New Mexico. Compared with a year ago, California was the only one of the 5 most important turkey producing States to show an increase. Decreases in these States were 18 percent in Texas, 22 percent in Minnesota, 26 percent in Iowa and 5 percent in Oregon.

The 1948 season began with 33 percent fewer breeding hens on farms. The hatching season got off to a slow start with most hatcheries setting very close to orders. Sufficient hatching eggs to meet demands were available early in the season, but later under an improved grower demand for late poults, eggs were scarce. Hatchings by months as a percent of last year were 80 percent in March, 79 percent in April, 86 percent in May, 174 percent in June and 110 percent in July. Demand for poults improved greatly during May, and if more eggs could have been obtained, the June hatch would have been much larger. Hatcheries reporting operations this season produced 7 percent fewer poults than in 1947.

EARLY MARKETINGS EXPECTED

The trend toward earlier marketings of turkeys has continued and growers, if they carry out their intentions, will market about 23 percent of their crop in October or earlier. Last year, growers indicated in early August that they expected to market 25 percent of their birds during this period, but actually sold about 20 percent of their birds. Growers slowed up

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marketings because they were reluctant to accept turkey prices lower than in 1946, after having met much higher feed costs during the growing season. This year, with rising turkey prices and lowering feed prices, growers can be expected to market their turkeys as soon as they are well finished. Aside from economic considerations, there has been a fairly steady trend toward earlier marketings of turkeys because flocks of early birds are easier to raise, have smaller death losses and run less risk of early winter storm losses.

Turkey growers expect to market about 39 percent of the crop in November, compared with 40 percent marketed in November last year. This means that growers intend to market about 52 percent of the crop before the end of November this year, compared with 60 percent last year. December marketings are expected to account for about 29 percent of the crop, compared with 32 percent last year. January or later expected marketings of 9 percent compare with 8 percent last year and with 13 percent, the 1942-46 average.

The actual marketing of the crop will depend to a considerable extent upon later developments. Demand for turkey meat is strong, prices are rising and feed prices are declining. Storage stocks of turkeys on August 1 this year totaled 19,059,000 pounds, compared with 59,319,000 pounds a year earlier, or about 40,000,000 pounds less. In short, turkey growers are in a good position and can choose the time of marketing that is to their advantage. In 1947 and 1946, marketings were somewhat later than intended. In 1945, 1943 and 1942, actual marketings were about the same as growers intentions reported in August, but in 1944, and from 1938 to 1941 inclusive, they were somewhat later.

In 1948, if growers intentions are realized, there will be 5 percent more turkeys marketed in October or earlier than were marketed during this period last year. Most of the early turkeys come from the West North Central and Western States. These areas accounted for 70 percent of the birds marketed in October or earlier last year. This year, the South Atlantic area with a 3 percent increase in the number of turkeys raised and with an expected October or earlier marketing of 29 percent becomes a factor in the early turkey situation.

#### PROPORTION OF TURKEY CROP MARKETED IN DIFFERENT MONTHS

(Reporters' averages)

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS	1947 Crop				1948 Crop (intended)			
	Oct. or: earlier:	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or: later	Oct. or: earlier:	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or: later
	Percent							
N. Atlantic	11.6	43.2	34.7	10.5	13.1	41.4	36.3	9.2
E. N. Central	9.2	44.2	41.5	5.1	15.8	44.2	37.2	2.8
W. N. Central	34.2	38.9	23.1	3.8	36.6	37.8	21.8	3.8
S. Atlantic	22.6	34.3	32.7	10.4	29.1	35.1	26.0	9.8
S. Central	11.0	40.9	38.1	10.0	10.4	42.1	34.3	13.2
Western	15.5	41.3	33.1	10.1	20.9	36.0	28.9	14.2
United States	19.8	40.5	32.1	7.6	23.4	38.8	29.1	8.7

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The following table on United States marketing of turkeys for the years 1940 through 1948 shows clearly the trend toward early marketings. The October or earlier marketings show a fairly consistent upward trend from the 8.8 percent of the crop for 1940 to 23.4 percent in 1948.

PROPORTION OF UNITED STATES TURKEY  
CROP MARKETING IN DIFFERENT MONTHS  
(Reporters' averages)

Year	Oct. or earlier	November	December	Jan. or later
Percent				
1948 <sup>1/</sup>	23.4	38.8	29.1	8.7
1947	19.8	40.5	32.1	7.6
1946	22.3	36.7	28.4	12.6
1945	19.6	36.4	30.0	14.0
1944	16.6	38.7	30.9	13.8
1943	10.1	41.1	35.2	13.6
1942	11.8	41.1	36.3	10.8
1941	8.5	39.8	38.9	12.8
1940	8.8	42.1	36.9	12.2

<sup>1/</sup> Marketing intentions for 1948.

**TURKEYS RAISED ON FARMS 1948, WITH COMPARISONS**

State and Division	Number Raised					Indicated 1948 2/	1948 as % of 1947 Percent
	Average 1935-44	1945	1946	1947 1/	2/		
Thousands							
Me.	46	59	51	50	37	74	
N. H.	55	92	75	73	61	84	
Vt.	118	185	174	137	100	73	
Mass.	233	354	333	316	307	97	
R. I.	24	35	33	33	31	94	
Conn.	108	226	212	178	178	100	
N. Y.	399	756	756	741	763	103	
N. J.	143	375	405	364	328	90	
Pa.	782	1,460	1,431	1,317	1,264	96	
N. ATL.	1,907	3,542	3,470	3,209	3,069	96	
Ohio	786	1,155	1,155	1,213	1,051	85	
Ind.	405	1,010	1,081	919	919	100	
Ill.	515	1,002	1,152	1,129	982	87	
Mich.	481	1,002	932	867	737	85	
Wis.	416	640	614	491	442	90	
E. N. CENT.	2,604	4,809	4,934	4,619	4,111	89	
Minn.	2,655	3,979	4,019	3,537	2,759	78	
Iowa	1,604	2,890	3,208	2,566	1,899	74	
Mo.	1,267	1,838	1,746	1,310	1,310	100	
N. Dak.	1,252	842	926	833	500	60	
S. Dak.	877	434	421	295	162	55	
Nebr.	788	1,054	970	873	716	82	
Kans.	917	914	896	663	550	83	
W. N. CENT.	9,358	11,951	12,186	10,077	7,896	78	
Del.	106	101	91	68	61	90	
Md.	402	490	466	396	321	81	
Va.	801	1,232	1,331	1,131	1,176	104	
W. Va.	253	416	437	398	498	125	
N. C.	244	376	421	379	341	90	
S. C.	173	420	420	357	418	117	
Ga.	127	173	182	182	187	103	
Fla.	112	115	115	109	98	90	
S. ATL.	2,218	3,323	3,463	3,020	3,100	103	
Ky.	322	259	220	165	173	105	
Tenn.	192	159	175	140	140	100	
Ala.	146	151	151	128	122	95	
Miss.	120	100	85	72	76	105	
Ark.	116	152	129	72	58	80	
La.	59	46	48	51	41	80	
Okla.	1,235	686	652	522	365	70	
Tex.	3,843	4,701	4,231	3,681	3,018	82	
S. CENT.	6,033	6,254	5,691	4,831	3,993	83	
Mont.	251	155	170	119	101	85	
Idaho	264	398	239	191	134	70	
Wyo.	212	173	156	131	118	90	
Colo.	809	947	900	810	713	88	
N. Mex.	72	80	88	94	94	100	
Ariz.	82	102	87	71	50	70	
Utah	910	2,036	1,332	1,079	1,079	100	
Nev.	53	51	46	37	30	80	
Wash.	734	1,533	1,303	1,121	1,121	100	
Oreg.	1,638	3,105	2,049	1,639	1,557	95	
Calif.	3,125	5,762	4,610	4,057	4,544	112	
WEST.	8,151	14,342	10,980	9,349	9,541	102	
U.S.	30,271	44,221	40,724	35,105	31,710	90	
1/ Revised. 2/ Preliminary estimates as of August 1, 1948							